

MEMORANDUM FOR: ~~VC/NIC~~ [redacted]

[redacted] --

In response to your question about cable dissemination of the Watch Committee Report or the NIO monthly reports: the need exists but these are inadequate products.

My case for a new warning product rests on (1) the DCI's stated priorities; (2) the perennial need for a product to fill the gap between estimates and current intelligence; (3) consumer complaints about the absence, vagueness or evasiveness of intelligence support in deciphering foreign intentions in flap situations. (My friend [redacted] often mutters about the "flabby," "unusable stuff" the "bureaucracy" serves up.)

Date 30 July 82

FORM 5-75 101 USE PREVIOUS EDITIONS

30 July 1982

MEMORANDUM FOR: Vice Chairman, NIC

SUBJECT : Filling a Gap in Warning Products

1. I would not recommend broad dissemination in cable form of either the NIO monthly reports or the Watch Committee report. These issuances do not meet the need for an authoritative assessment of the warning outlook on a regular basis.

2. There has long been a need for a warning product that would provide an incisive statement of headquarters' view to both the Washington policy community and US missions abroad. This product would not contain a recital of events and reports. The assumption should be that consumers are already well briefed on current "facts." The emphasis instead should be on forward-looking evaluations of the warning implications of developments and intelligence information, particularly with respect to foreign motives, calculations, and intentions--all with a view to conveying CIA judgments on "what will happen next?" and "how should we think about these questions?"

3. Estimates and other interagency issuances often serve this function well but formal estimates cannot cover the entire warning horizon on a regular, systematic basis. What we need is a monthly or biweekly warning assessment that will present headquarters' most thoughtful and authoritative views of current and potential (60-90 days) lines of development in a succinct form. Such a product would meet the DCI's emphasis on greater attention to crisis anticipation and avoidance of surprise. He has publicly identified political intentions as "the most important and difficult problem of all." In a speech last winter, the DCI said, "If we can't expect infallible prophecy from the nation's investment in intelligence...we can expect foresight, a careful delineation of possibilities."

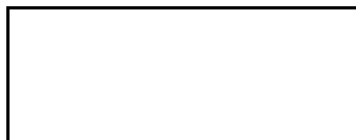
4. The NIC is the logical author of a regular warning assessment that would represent the DCI's judgments. The NIOs are uniquely qualified to perform this task by virtue of their substantive command of intelligence information and their awareness of various views throughout the Community. In the interest of timeliness and clarity of judgment, warning assessments should not be coordinated with NEIB agencies but they should present dissenting or alternative views of other agencies or experienced analysts outside the NIC. The greatest obstacle to effective warning, especially in the early stages of a developing situation, is not the existence of competing or conflicting analysis but rather the absence of any clear, well-articulated views. Warning assessments representing the DCI's judgments must be drafted by senior officers with authority to make projections that go well beyond the very limited consensus that normally prevails in the analytical community. This latitude is particularly important in cases where NIO/NIC/DCI views differ significantly from those of current intelligence analysts.

5. This is not the place for detailed recommendations on the format, content and production procedures of a new warning product, but I would cite the best of JIC assessments as a partial model. The regional NIOs, their assistants, and the AG would be directly involved through contributing draft items. The Chairman, NIC should function as a kind of managing editor--deciding content and working with drafters in shaping lucid and succinct judgments. The NIO/W staff would oversee

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the mechanics of production, and a staff member (special assistant for warning) might prepare final drafts, drawing on NIO/AG contributions.

6. If you and the Chairman see any merit in this proposal, I would be ready to offer detailed recommendations and perhaps a mock-up product. We should have no illusions about the time and effort this exercise would require. A hard-hitting warning product carrying the DCI's authority would demand the most careful thought and drafting. It would have to be regarded as a high priority NIC mission. CIA has never attempted such an enterprise, but the need and opportunity seem to me obvious. I'm confident the NIC has the resources to achieve a major breakthrough in service to senior consumers and missions abroad if it is ready to invest the effort.



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